Coronavirus Guidance
Frequently Asked Questions
Commonwealth of Kentucky Employees

1. **What is novel coronavirus?**
   COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that had not been previously identified in humans and can easily spread from person to person. It is a respiratory disease causing illness that can range from very mild to severe, including illness resulting in death.

   Commonwealth of Kentucky public health officials are monitoring the situation very closely and working with federal, state, and local partners.

   Continue your current workplace practices and report to work as usual. Should an employee become ill, they should follow normal call-in procedures.

2. **Where can I go for up-to-date information about coronavirus/COVID-19 in Kentucky?**

   KY Department for Public Health
   http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov

   COVID-19 Public Hotline
   1-800-722-5725

   The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
   Atlanta, GA
   Toll free: 1-800-232-4636
   http://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19

3. **What can I do to protect myself?**
   The following may help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:
   - If you are exhibiting Coronavirus symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, and coughing), stay home. [Further guidance on leave options is forthcoming].
   - Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
   - Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
   - Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
   - Clean frequently touched surfaces.

4. **I am having flu-like symptoms. What should I do?**
   You should stay home when you are sick to help prevent the spread of illness to others.

   If you need to seek medical care, call ahead to a healthcare provider if you:
   - Have been in an affected area within the past 14 days;
   - Are concerned you might have been exposed; or
   - Have symptoms of fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.

   If an employee is a member of the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan, we recommend members use

telehealth when possible, as it can help prevent them from spreading the virus further within a physical clinical setting. KEHP's telehealth provider is LiveHealth Online. If you are not a KEHP member, check with your insurance provider to see what telehealth options are available to you. Information about how to access LiveHealth Online can be found at: https://personnel.ky.gov/Pages/livehealth.aspx.

5. **Can I wear a facemask at work to help prevent infection from coronavirus?**
    The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it.

    Per the CDC website, facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for healthcare workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

6. **Will my agency provide hand sanitizer, tissues, and cleaning supplies for the office?**
    Agencies may purchase hand sanitizer, tissues, and other cleaning supplies, such as disinfecting wipes, as needed.

7. **What kinds of environmental precautions should employees take for conference rooms and shared equipment?**
    Like influenza and the common cold, the CDC states that it may be possible that a person can get COVID- 19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The main way the virus spreads is through droplets from coughing and/or sneezing.

8. **What are my telecommuting options if I would like to work from home?**
    Talk with your supervisor about telecommuting options for you. If you are sick, let your work know and stay home. If you or a family member become ill with COVID-19, follow the advice of public health officials.

9. **Can I impose a self-isolation on myself after traveling abroad?**
    You should discuss your concerns with your supervisor and your human resources ("HR") representative. You should also consult with your healthcare provider.

10. **What if offices need to be closed due to a COVID-19 outbreak?**
    Each state agency has a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) that outlines how to deliver essential services during an emergency.

11. **How do I find out if the office I am assigned to work is closed?**
    Because we provide critical services to all Kentucky citizens, we avoid closing offices whenever possible. Please contact your supervisor for information.

12. **What if a co-worker is showing signs of illness and is still coming to work?**
    If you are concerned about a co-worker showing signs of illness and still coming to work, talk to your supervisor or HR representative.

13. **Am I required to help a customer or client who is showing signs of COVID-19 or another communicable disease?**
    Employees should discuss their concerns with their supervisor and/or HR representative.

14. I am scheduled to travel for work. Can I choose not to go due to COVID-19?
   Check with your supervisor to determine if your travel is necessary prior to traveling.

15. Where can I go for support related to my stress, anxiety, and fears related to the coronavirus?
   The current coronavirus outbreak and constant media coverage can be anxiety-producing. While it is important to stay informed, there are things we can do to manage our mental well-being:
   - Avoid speculation and get your information from reputable sources such as the official Kentucky Coronavirus Website: (telephone: **1-800-722-5725 /** website: **http://www.kycovid19.ky.gov/).**
   - Manage how you follow the outbreak in the media. If the news is causing you stress or anxiety, reduce your media intake and refer to the reputable information sources listed in the bullet point above.
   - Talk about your fears, anxiety, and stress. The Kentucky Employee Assistance Program provides confidential services for employees. Employees may contact KEAP at 502-564-5788 or (800) 445-5327. Please also review KEAP information at https://personnel.ky.gov/Pages/KEAP.aspx.